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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 000735

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV ASEC CASC MR ML

SUBJECT: MALIAN PRESIDENT CONDEMNS COUP TO MAURITANIAN ENVOY

REF: BAMAKO 723

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Mary Beth Leonard for reasons 1 .4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) During his August 19 meeting with U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Leavitt (septel), Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) said that he had spoken to the Mauritanian military and expressed his condemnation of their actions. ATT told them that he, too, had been a soldier who had overthrown a government, but that once they had organized a political process and elections, he and the others taking part in the Malian coup had stepped away to let democracy work. He reiterated that he had conveyed to the Mauritanian military that he roundly condemned condemned their actions and could not support their position. Charge thanked the President for this firm expression, and referred to the USG's own robust response. She noted that events in Mauritania were regrettable not only as a step backward in that country's democratic process, but for the complications they may bring to the efforts of countries in the region and international partners to address issues of regional security.

¶2. (U) In a statement issued by the Presidency over the weekend, the Malian government said that Col. Ahmedou Bamba Ould Baya, a member of the Mauritanian High Council, had visited ATT on Friday evening at the Presidency to deliver a message from General Aziz. While the statement stopped short of explicitly condemning the coup in Mauritania, it did say that ATT reaffirmed Mali's support for "a certain number of principles," including the African Union's resolutions and texts, particularly those regarding institutional changes, and the stability and security of Mauritania, Mali's neighbor and friend. He expressed his support for African Union efforts for a quick resolution of the situation through dialogue and consultation.

LEONARD